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PRESIDENT KIBAKI APPOINTS CHAIRMAN OF THE TRUTH, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION IN KENYA

NAIROBI – President Kibaki of the Republic of Kenya has announced the appointment of Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat as Chairman of Kenya's newly-created Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC). The Commission was set up by legislation approved by parliament last year. Its purpose is to investigate unlawful killings, human rights violations, historical injustices, corruption and ethnic clashes since 1963.

The legislation instructs the TJRC to make specific recommendations to the Attorney General on what crimes to bring to court. Additionally, the agreement empowers the TJRC Commissioners to recommend amnesty in civil proceedings where there have already been convictions.

"Ambassador Kiplagat has been at the forefront of Kenya's initiatives to rebuild peace and reconciliation within Kenya and Eastern Africa. His appointment demonstrates the Kenyan government's desire to bring to justice those who have committed atrocities in our country," said H.E. Ambassador Peter Ogego.

Ambassador Kiplagat is known for his work as a peace-worker, diplomat and civil servant. Prior to his appointment as Chairman of the Commission, he served as Kenya's Ambassador to France, High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Kenya's Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and most recently as Executive Director of the Africa Peace Forum and Chairman of the Nairobi Stock Exchange. Furthermore, he worked as the team leader on the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism (CEWARN) project, organizing and participating in workshops and seminars to promote peace and security throughout the region.

In addition to Ambassador Kiplagat, President Kibaki appointed nine other Commissioners including Betty Murungi, a Harvard-trained human rights lawyer as Vice Chairperson, Tom Ojienda, Margaret Wambui Shava, Tecla Namachanja, and Major Gen (Rtd) Ahmed Sheikh Farah. The Commission also includes international members Gertrude Chawatama from Zambia, Berhanu Dinka from Ethiopia and Ronald Siye from the U.S. who served as a legal consultant to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 1996 to 2000. All Commissioners will serve for a two-year period.

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